

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 010 - 070

TO : ALL KBP MEMBER STATIONS/NETWORKS

FRM : The President

Date : October 26, 2010

RE : Amendments to Article 6 (Crime & Crisis Situations)
of the KBP Broadcast Code

Amendments to Article 6 (Crime & Crisis Situations) of the KBP Broadcast Code, were approved in a General Membership Meeting on October 20, 2010 held at the Crowne Regency Hotel, Makati City. These amendments are meant to address issues and concerns about media coverage which were raised in connection with the August 23, 2010 hostage taking incident.

Attached is a copy of Article 6, as amended, which will take effect five (5) days from the issuance of this Circular.

For your information.


HERMAN Z. BASBAÑO
President



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APPROVED AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 6, CRIME AND CRISIS SITUATIONS, KBP BROADCAST CODE

Article 6. Crime and Crisis Situations

Sec. 1. The coverage of crimes in progress or crisis situations, such as hostage-taking or kidnapping, shall consider the safety and security of human lives above the right of the public to information. If it is necessary in avoiding injury or loss of life, the station should consider delaying its airing.

Sec. 2. The coverage of crime and crisis situations shall not provide vital information, or offer comfort or support to the perpetrator. **Due to the danger posed to human life in such situations, it shall be assumed that the perpetrator has access to the broadcast of the station.**

Sec. 3. While the incident is going on, the station shall desist from showing or reporting the strategies, plans, and tactics employed by the authorities to resolve the situation—including the positioning of forces, deployment of machine and equipment, or any other information that might jeopardize their operations or put lives in danger.

Sec. 4. The station or any of its personnel shall not communicate by any means, whether on-air or off-air, with the perpetrator or victim without coordinating with the officer in charge of the situation. If the perpetrator or the victim initiates communication with the station or the coverage crew, the officer-in-charge shall be immediately notified.

Sec. 5. Anchors, reporters, or other station personnel shall not act as negotiators or interfere in any way in negotiations conducted by the authorities. If asked to assist in the negotiations, they shall first notify station management and carefully weigh how their participation will affect their journalistic balance before getting involved.

Sec. 6. The station and its personnel are expected to comply with restrictions imposed by the authorities in the scene of the incident, such as space assignments for media; police perimeter lines; the use of television lights; the deployment of coverage vans, helicopters, and other vehicles; and the operation of transmitting and communication equipment.

Sec. 7. The legal injunction to preserve evidence in a crime scene should always be kept in mind. When the incident is resolved, the coverage crew shall follow the lead of the authorities in the preservation of evidence, taking care not to move, alter, or destroy anything that might be used as evidence.

Sec. 8. The station should always be aware of the following provision in their

legislative franchise: "The President of the Philippines, in times of rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency, disaster, or disturbance of peace and order may temporarily take over and operate the stations of the grantee, temporarily suspend the operation of any station in the interest of public safety, security, and public welfare, or to authorize the temporary use and operation thereof by any department of the government upon due compensation to the grantee for the use of the said stations during the period when they shall be so operated."

Sec. 9. When interviewing family members and relatives, friends, or associates of the perpetrator, care shall be taken to avoid provoking the perpetrator, interfering with the negotiations, or hindering the peaceful resolution of the situation.

Sec. 10. The tone and demeanor of the coverage should not aggravate the situation. Anchors and reporters must always keep in mind that lives are in danger and could be placed at greater risk by the way they report.

Sec. 11. A coverage should avoid inflicting undue shock or [and] pain to families and loved ones of victims of crimes, crisis situations, or of disasters, accidents, and other tragedies. (S)

Sec. 12. Unless there is justification for doing so, the identity of victims of crimes or crisis situations in progress or the names of fatalities shall not be announced until their next of kin have been notified, the situation resolved or their names have been released by the authorities. (S)

Sec. 13. Images that are gruesome, revolting, shocking, obscene, scandalous, or extremely disturbing or offensive, shall not be shown or described in graphic detail. When such images suddenly occur during a coverage, the station shall cut them off the air.

Sec. 14. Persons who are taken into custody by authorities as victims or for allegedly committing private crimes (such as indecency or lasciviousness), shall not be identified, directly or indirectly -- unless a formal complaint has already been filed against them. They shall not be subjected to undue shame and humiliation, such as showing them in indecent or vulgar acts and poses. (S)

Sec. 15. Stations are encouraged to adopt standard operating procedures (SOP's) consistent with this Code to govern the conduct of their news personnel during the coverage of crime and crisis situations. (A).

**** - Revised and approved provision in Bold Face**

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